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MAO TSE-TUNG AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

III. "CONTRADICTIONS" IN A "SOCIALIST" SOCIETY

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MAO TSE-TUNG AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

III. "CONTRADICTIONS" IN A "SOCIALIST" SOCIETY

This is a working paper, the fifth and last of a series on Mao Tse-tung as a Marxist philosopher. The first discussed Mao's contributions--alleged and actual--to dialectical materialism, and the last four his contributions to aspects of historical materialism. This particular paper is published slightly out of sequence; in the collected papers, it should precede the recently-published paper on Mao's contributions to doctrine on the "transition to 'socialism.'"

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This paper was written, as was each of the other four, by [redacted] of the China Division of the Sino-Soviet Bloc Area. The Sino-Soviet Studies Group would welcome comment on the paper, addressed to [redacted] who is now a member of the group, at Ext. 7447.

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SUMMARY

Lenin maintained that "contradictions" would still exist in a "socialist" society, but that these would not be "antagonistic." Chinese theorists acknowledge this as Lenin's position, but point out that he did not develop this thought. Stalin's discussions of the concept, and developments of it by Soviet theorists after 1935, are also minimized by Peiping.

Chinese theorists allege that Mao Tse-tung applied the general theory of "contradictions" to the specific matter of production, developing the theory of contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production. Actually, Mao's pronouncements on this question (1957) do not seem to differ from Stalin's (1952). Neither Stalin nor Mao did anything more than to assert that contradictions of this kind "cannot" be antagonistic.

The Chinese also claim that Mao developed the concept of contradictions among the people--by describing these also as non-antagonistic and clearly different from contradictions with the enemy. Mao's "people" by definition are those who are non-antagonistic to the regime. The "contribution" of Mao seems to lie in including the national bourgeoisie among the "people," but even here Mao owes other Chinese theorists a heavy debt.

Mao's principal title to originality on "contradictions" is in respect to a matter on which Chinese theorists enter no claim for him. That is, Mao in 1957 explicitly rejected the Communist fiction that there cannot be contradictions between the leaders and the led in a "socialist" society. Mao's encouragement (in 1957) of criticism of the Chinese party from outside the party and by the whole populace was also unprecedented, as was his stated toleration of "small" strikes. Moscow, recognizing that these innovations constituted a rebuke to Soviet methods, disapproved of all three of them.

Mao believed in 1957 that his policy of encouraging criticism would show the bloc how to resolve contradictions among the people properly, preventing these from becoming antagonistic. Out of vanity and obstinacy, he persisted in his experiment

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for some time after it had gone wrong, and he has sustained an illusion of criticism ever since. However, his suppression of genuine criticism after mid-1957 was a clear retreat from his doctrine.

Of Mao's "contributions"--the thesis of leaders-led contradiction, encouragement of non-Communist criticism, toleration of small strikes, and the thesis of non-antagonistic contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the working class--only the last is an acceptable topic of discussion today. The "Hundred Flowers" policy of 1961 is far from the policy of 1957.

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MAO TSE-TUNG AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

III. "CONTRADICTIONS" IN A "SOCIALIST" SOCIETY*

Adopting an idea of early Greek philosophers, Hegel held that oppositions, which he also called contradictions, are found everywhere in nature and thought and that history proceeds through them. Marx accepted this in part but stressed the concept of "class", maintaining that class contradiction is the driving force of all social development. The appearance of a major contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in capitalist society would be, Marx asserted, the harbinger of the ultimate demise of that society and of the victory of the proletariat. He made no comment, however, regarding contradictions in a "classless" society--the envisaged Communist society.

"Non-antagonistic" Contradictions

It was Lenin who maintained that contradictions would still exist under "socialism." In discussing class struggle, Marx had used the terms "antagonism" and "contradiction" interchangeably. (1) Lenin, however, at times did not:

> Antagonism and contradiction are by no means the same. Under socialism the first will vanish, the second will remain. If in developed socialism there were no contradictions--contradictions

*"Contradiction," in Communist vocabulary, is variously used to express the ideas of dissimilarity, mutual opposition, contrariety, conflict, and antagonism. It is, therefore, adaptable to almost any use by a clever writer or leader. These discussions often seem to be a stupid and tiresome verbal game, but real issues are sometimes being discussed.

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> between productive forces and relations of production, between production and demand, no contradictions in the development of technique, etc.--then the development of socialism would be impossible, then instead of movement we should have stagnation. (2)

Not antagonism but contradictions, which according to Marx were the motive forces of all social development, were thus to continue under "developed socialism."

Chinese Communist theorists acknowledge Lenin's contribution to the matter of contradictions in a "socialist" society. And well they might, as Mao himself, in On Contradiction (first published in China in April 1952), quotes Lenin's abovementioned statement. (3)

But in order to clear the way for Mao as a creative thinker on contradictions, the theorists go on to minimize Lenin's contribution. Theorist Pien Chang says that, "Lenin was restricted by historical factors and was therefore not able to make a detailed elaboration of the basic theory of contradiction," (4) and Sun Ting-kuo alleges that, "Lenin in his day had come too late to make an all-round observation on the matter of internal contradictions in a socialist society." (5)

Stalin's statements on contradictions under "socialism" are also mentioned, but only in a general way, and are similarly minimized.

Actually, Stalin discussed the matter in considerable detail in many of his works. In 1925, Stalin acknowledged the existence of contradictions within Soviet society and insisted that these "internal contradictions" can be solved through the "directing role" of the state. (6) Among the various contradictions mentioned by Stalin in 1925 was the contradiction between the proletariat and the peasantry, which together with other "internal contradictions," is perpetuated by the continued existence of "external contradiction" between capitalist states and the Soviet Union. Stalin enumerated more internal contradictions in his speech to the Stakhanovites in 1935. (7) In his Letter to Ivanov of 1938, he implied that the internal contradictions had been solved, but in Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR (1952), Stalin once again conceded their existence under "socialism."

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Lenin's statement that antagonism would disappear and Stalin's 1925 position that "internal contradictions" could be resolved on the basis of common interests provided the foundation for a general theory of "non-antagonistic" contradictions. Soviet writers had begun to develop the theory by 1935. Thus in the Soviet Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, a distinction is made between "antagonistic contradictions... and contradictions that do not have an antagonistic character.... Not all contradictions are antagonistic." (8) A similar distinction is made in 1935 in an article in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. (9) In 1939, M. Rozental and P. Yudin wrote that "the contradiction between the working class and the working peasantry does not carry the character of antagonism." (10)

Starting in 1947, discussion of non-antagonistic contradictions increased among Soviet theorists. A. Zhdanov gave national and international prominence to the view that "criticism and self-criticism" would serve as a technique for preventing contradictions from becoming antagonistic. (11) P. Yudin in 1948 distinguished "different types of contradictions." "Contradictions and antagonisms are not one and the same thing. There are contradictions that are antagonistic and not antagonistic." (12) Enlarging their 1939 statement on contradiction, Rozental and Yudin stated in 1951 that "Marxist dialectics distinguishes antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions.... The Soviet Union gave a clear example and model of the resolution of the non-antagonistic contradiction between the working class and the peasantry, which had enormous international significance." (13) The authors seemed to predict that other bloc countries will follow the Soviet precedent in handling non-antagonistic contradictions: "Countries of people's democracy are learning by the great example of the Soviet Union how, on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, to overcome the contradictions which still exist between them and to turn small, fragmented agriculture into large-scale socialist agriculture. With the victory of socialism, the antagonistic contradiction inside the country disappears.... Lenin and Stalin teach that under socialism, antagonistic contradictions disappear, but that non-antagonistic contradictions remain." (14) And in August 1951, the Soviet theorist B. Kedrov wrote in Bol'shevik that "The Marxist dialectic recognizes two fundamental types of contradictions: antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions." (15)

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Claims for Mao: The "Basic" Contradiction

It is alleged by the Chinese theorists that Mao went well beyond the Soviet general theory of contradictions under "socialism." That is, Mao took the general theory and applied it to the specific matter of production. In a jointly written article, three Chinese writers claim that Mao's On the Problem of the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (June 1957) is "a great contribution to the theory of the basic contradiction in a socialist society," the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production. (16) This particular claim was made in June 1958 on the first anniversary of the publication of Mao's abovementioned article.

The basis for this claim is Mao's statement of June 1957 that "The basic contradiction in a socialist society is still between the productive forces and the relations of production, between the superstructure and the economic base." "There is conformity as well as contradiction between the relations of production and the development of the productive forces; similarly, there is conformity as well as contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base." (17)

Actually, Mao seems to have added nothing original to the theory of the basic contradiction in production. Stalin had begun to elaborate on the theory in 1952. On 2 October 1952, letters written by Stalin months earlier were published under the title Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR. Certain Soviet political economists apparently had written that the possibility of a contradiction between the productive forces and relations of production in Soviet society did not exist. One Yaroshenko was condemned by Stalin in this way:

> Comrade Yaroshenko is mistaken in affirming that under socialism there are no contradictions between relations of production and the productive forces of society.... It would be wrong to be complacent...and imagine that there are no contradictions between our productive forces and relations of production. Contradictions there definitely are and will be, since the development of production lags and will lag behind the development of productive forces. (18)

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Stalin went on to deny, in line with Lenin's statement, that these contradictions would become antagonistic: "With a correct policy on the part of the directing agencies, these contradictions cannot turn into antagonism and matters here cannot go so far as a conflict between relations of production and society's productive forces." Mao's general statement on contradictions--which was made in his June 1957 article--is similar to Stalin's 1952 remark. Mao stated that "Contradictions in socialist society are...not antagonistic and can be resolved one after the other by the socialist system itself." (19)

Theorist Ts. Stepanyan more fully expounded (in 1955) the theory of the basic contradiction under "socialism." In a definitive article, Stepanyan says that "The basic contradiction of the socialist structure is particularly manifest in the general contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production." (20) He goes on to link the basic contradiction with the superstructure--to which the "needs of all the people" belong--and the base--to which "production of material" goods belong: "The basic contradiction under socialism is the contradiction between the limitlessly growing needs of all the people and the stage of development of the production of material and cultural goods which has been achieved in each given period." Other Soviet theorists described the basic contradiction as "the contradiction between the limitlessly growing material and cultural demands of society and the stage of development of production reached in a given period, as well as the contradictions between the new productive forces and the old aspects of the relations of production." (21)

Mao's 1957 statement on the basic contradiction as a contradiction between productive forces and relations, between superstructure and base is not a "great contribution" to the theory of basic contradiction. It is merely a paraphrase of Soviet views expressed generally by Stalin in 1952 and in detail and precision by Stepanyan in 1955. (22)

Contradictions "Among the People"

Theorist Ai Ssu-chi claims that Mao's June 1957 article "further develops Lenin's viewpoint" on contradictions under "socialism." (23) "Comrade Mao Tse-tung...points out that

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in a socialist society the contradiction among the people is non-antagonistic." The term "people" had largely replaced the term working class in Mao's vocabulary, particularly in 1957, and had come to mean all those loyal to the regime regardless of class. Theorist Pang Tzu-nien says, "Chairman Mao's great contribution to the Marxist theory of state in his article On the Problem of the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People is this: he drew a sharp distinction between the enemy-ourselves contradiction and the contradiction among-the-people. He also made a scientific, historical materialist definition of the concept, 'people.'" (24) Mao apparently drew this distinction for CCP cadres in order to correct their Stalinist way of attacking as "counterrevolutionary" any minor political mistake of the intellectuals (including young students) and the remaining capitalists.

Because Mao included the national bourgeoisie in the concept "people," the claim that he had made a contribution to Communist doctrine on this point appears to be, on first consideration, valid. In his article On the Problem of the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People, Mao says that "In our country, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie is a contradiction among the people. The class struggle waged between the two is, by and large, a class struggle within the ranks of the people." (25) Marxists-Leninists have maintained that temporary, tactical compromises with the bourgeoisie are frequently necessary in the course of the "democratic" revolution but have insisted that such compromises must be temporary because the "contradiction" between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is basically and in the long-run antagonistic, especially during the "socialist" revolution. Mao, however, says not only that temporary compromises are necessary during the "democratic" revolution, but also that even during the"socialist" revolution an alliance can be sustained with a section of the bourgeoisie, as they are not to be counted among the enemy. We can agree with Sun Ting-kuo that "Never before in history has this been written during the stage of socialist revolution." (26)

On second consideration, however, it appears that Mao owes his own theorists a heavy debt for the claim of originality. Sun Ting-kuo says that "Regarding the contradiction between China's bourgeoisie and the working class, Chairman Mao brilliantly expounded the view that this contradiction has an antagonistic aspect and non-antagonistic aspect." But on this

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matter, Mao had merely selected one of four positions arrived at by various top-level Chinese Communist theorists during a conference sponsored by the Philosophical Research Office, Academy of Sciences China. Stepanyan's article, which had sparked a debate in the USSR, was followed by a similar debate in China. The conference, held on 22 and 23 October 1956, heard the views of (among others) theorists Kuan Feng, Feng Ting, Ho Wei, Su Hsin, and Ai Ssu-chi. Discussing the "nature of the bourgeoisie-working class contradiction during China's transition period," the scholars arrived at four different positions:

(1) One opinion held that the bourgeoisie-working class contradiction during China's transition is of a dual nature, including antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradiction.

(2) One opinion held that this contradiction is basically non-antagonistic; but there is an aspect in which antagonism is unavoidable. The method of peaceful transformation is basically non-antagonistic, but it includes an aspect of antagonism in solving this contradiction.

(3) One opinion held that the contradiction is antagonistic, but antagonistic contradiction can be solved by non-antagonistic methods.

(4) One opinion held that the contradiction is antagonistic and the method of solving it is also antagonistic. (27)

What is the extent of Mao's originality on the matter of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class? It is merely that he appears to have selected the second position and incorporated it into his June 1957 article.

Mao's Liberalization

It is on more practical matters that Mao's February 1957 speech and the June article (revised) based on it show real originality. In his effort to gain the lost confidence of

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Chinese intellectuals and to rectify bureaucratic practices of CCP cadres, Mao discarded at least one theory, one fiction. Mao explicitly rejected the Communist fiction that there could be no contradiction between the Communist party and the populace, between the "government and the masses...between those in position of leadership and the led." (28)

The first time that this fiction came under attack by Mao was in a published discussion of an enlarged CCP politburo meeting. On 5 April 1956, the Chinese leaders made their first comment on de-Stalinization and its shock-effect, particularly after Khrushchev's "secret speech" in February. The Chinese comment, printed in the Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao under the title "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," contained the objectionable statement that "the existence of contradictions between the individual and the collective in a socialist society is nothing strange." The statement was objectionable to Moscow not because it was false, which obviously it was not, but because it was unprecedented in Communist literature. It exposed a long-standing Communist fiction as just that. Furthermore, the Chinese chose to apply it to all "socialist" countries, once again by-passing Moscow and implicitly rejecting Moscow as the only source of doctrine for Communist-led nations.*

The second attack appeared in another politburo discussion, which was published in the Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao on 29 December in an article entitled "More On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." The article stated that among the various non-antagonistic contradictions, there was the contradiction "between the government and the people in socialist countries." This is identical with the statement made by Mao in his article of June 1957.

Whether Mao was really the author of the 5 April and 29 December 1956 statements is conjectural. The Chinese leaders apparently intended the published version of the politburo discussions to appear as the collective opinion of the politburo;

*Khrushchev stated publicly that Mao's thesis was not applicable to the USSR.

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this was part of their effort to undercut Moscow's implicit attacks on Mao and his "cult of personality." Mao is not mentioned once in either of the long politburo statements, but it was implied--as has also been stated--that the CCP had made no mistakes in policy since Mao took over effective leadership in 1935. In any case, Mao was probably the final arbiter, if not the author, of the politburo statements which contained the remarks on the leaders-led contradiction.

Prior to Mao's February 1957 speech, his campaign to mollify and gain the confidence of non-Communist intellectuals had come under attack within China. The campaign, which had been sparked by Chou En-lai's January 1956 speech to intellectuals and which had blossomed into the "Hundred Flowers" movement by fall 1956, was openly criticized by some party members as "harmful to the cause of socialism." This bold complaint earned several critics among the party's literature and art cadres a stinging rebuke administered by the party hack Mao Tun:

> Criticisms that have been made of the "Hundred Flowers and Hundred Schools of Thought" line give the impression that this line can be more harmful than beneficial. It has splashed cold water on the face of intellectuals, who are inspired and animated by the new line. (29)

Mao Tun was not the only one to respond. In his February speech, Mao Tse-tung himself, reading from notes, swept aside all critics and opened the door for direct criticism of the CCP. Mao's liberalization views went well beyond the de-Stalinization policy instituted by other bloc leaders. According to textual extracts of the four-hour speech which appeared in the New York Times on 13 June 1957 and which are "absolutely authentic" in the opinion of Mr. Sidney Gruson, Mao warned members of the CCP to brace themselves for non-Communist criticism:

> Marxism-Leninism is not afraid of criticism and does not fear discussion.... Marxism-Leninism must come out to meet criticism head on because only in this way can it be strengthened and become a really great power and not a new religion or taboo.... The opinions against the policy of "Hundred Flowers" are the result of fear of criticism, fear of losing the monopolistic position.

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> Marx never said that he should not be criticized. To those who do not follow the teaching of Marx, I would address an old saying: "He who does not allow himself to be criticized during his life, will be criticized after his death." (30)

The Soviet doctrine of "criticism and self-criticism" has been interpreted in many ways by various Communist leaders. It had been designated by A. Zhdanov as the new source of social development under "socialism." But criticism had always been of one party member by another and not of the whole party. No Communist leader in a position of authority prior to Mao (1957) has called for all non-Communists, for the whole populace to engage in criticism of the Communist party, and neither does Stepanyan in his discussion of how to use "criticism and self-criticism" to solve contradictions in a "socialist" society.

Thus, in addition to his statement that there is a conflict or contradiction between the leaders and the led even under "socialism," Mao's encouragement of criticism of the CCP from without and by the whole populace for the purpose of "party rectification" is unprecedented in Communist literature and practice. These ideas have no Soviet paternity and they represent Mao's contribution (in the face of implicit Soviet opposition) to the Communist discussion of contradictions under "socialism."

Mao's encouragement of criticism was for the specific purpose of preventing non-antagonistic contradiction between leaders and led from becoming antagonistic.

Regarding one aspect of the practical matter of permitting criticism of the CCP from without and by the whole populace, Mao apparently emphasized in his speech the value of open disputes between Communists and non-Communists. According to the version of the original text available to Mr. Drew Middleton (31), Mao suggested two consecutive courses. First was to let disputes be carried on, if both sides wanted them. Second was to permit such disputes to reach their end rather than "smothering" them halfway, even if this meant permitting the disputes to go on for days until the matter was settled. In this way, non-Communist and Communist "schools of thought" contended against each other.

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In 1957, there were many indications that Moscow disapproved of Mao's policy of "many schools." Among these indications was the subtle alteration of the slogan by a Soviet scholar who said that people in the USSR look with interest at the Chinese policy of permitting "many scholars" to contend.

In the June 1957 version of his February speech, Mao reiterates his statement that Marxism can be criticized. He adds, however, six criteria (not in his February speech) as the basis for such criticism, two of which were designed to prevent any significant political attacks on the party. "Words and actions can be judged right if they:...(2) are beneficial, not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction, and...(5) tend to strengthen, not to cast off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist party." (32) Mao says that of the six criteria, these two are "the most important." He then says that the criteria were put forward "in order to foster and not hinder the free discussion of various questions among the people." In making this statement, he was, of course, aware that free discussion would thereafter exclude any political matters. From this it was only a step to the conclusion that his original concept of "Hundred Flowers" was a dismal failure. But Mao has seemed reluctant to admit this and even today the slogan "Hundred Flowers" is retained partly to demonstrate continuity and to deny that failure.

Returning to Mao's February 1957 speech, in attacking bureaucratic practices of CCP cadres, he makes another innovation in his statement that "small" strikes against the Communist authorities would be tolerated. In the version reported by Mr. Gruson from Warsaw, Mao says:

> Internal antagonisms should be dealt with as soon as they appear. But what to do if this is hampered by bureaucracy, which in turn leads to demonstrations and strikes? Such incidents should be considered as warning signals to sectors of the administration where bureaucracy has made its nest.
>
> In this respect, it can even be said that small strikes are beneficial because they point to mistakes committed. Of course, big general strikes cannot be considered in the same way because they are not fought to rectify mistakes or to satisfy rightful grievances, but are directed against the regime itself. (33)

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Mao goes on to say that "persuasion" rather than reprisals or force should be used to dissuade workers from using the "method of small strikes." The same was to hold true for strikes by students. When Tientsin University students went on strike in late 1956 to protest the extension of university courses by a year, CCP activists are said to have talked to the students "for three days and three nights," resolving the dispute by conciliation, i.e. by agreeing to abolish the extension. (34) As Mao is said to have put it, the proper conclusion for a dispute was either that those who raised the initial argument understood they were mistaken or that errors on the part of the authorities were exposed and corrected. (35) Mao's concern here is with "rectifying" bureaucracy among CCP cadres in order to prevent further strikes.

It was, of course, the Polish press rather than the Soviet press which reported with approval this professed willingness of Mao to show a degree of tolerance for small strikes and resolve them by means of persuasion and conciliation. Moscow remained silent on the matter.

Three of Mao's innovations--open acknowledgement that conflicts exist at times between leaders and the led in "socialist" countries, encouragement of criticism of the CCP by non-Communists and the whole population, and toleration of "small" strikes and their resolution through conciliation--constituted an implicit rebuke of Soviet methods. Mao criticized Stalin for his "rule of terror and liquidation of thousands of Communists," and went on to make a more generalized statement of Soviet experience in a condescending manner:

> The Soviet Union has many experiences that can be used for the benefit of our country, especially in regard to industrial progress. But other experiences of the Soviet Union cannot be neglected and we have to consider them if only not to repeat the mistakes. (36)

Mao's statements in this vein were not very flattering to Moscow. Furthermore, they did nothing to discourage feelings of nationalism among the restive anti-Stalinists in the bloc who, like Mao, wanted to avoid Soviet "mistakes." There appears to be no difference between these statements and anti-Stalinist statements on Soviet "mistakes" made by Gomulka.

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Mao's "Realism"

During liberalization and party "rectification" in 1957, Mao apparently was anxious to prove to the Communist bloc and neutrals that in China a moderate attitude could be adopted by the CCP toward non-Communists without the drastic repercussions of a "Hungary." He was in a cocky mood. In his February speech, Mao played the role of teacher, and probably thought himself a good one, much better than his contemporaries in other Communist parties. In discussing the kinds of contradictions which might drive a wedge between the "masses and the leaders," Mao says:

> The leaders must show great farsightedness in noticing and solving these contradictions by the proper methods and in the right time. Those leaders who will not take notice of these contradictions or who will not be able to solve them by a proper method are threatened by serious political danger. And this may happen because not only do they not keep up with the course of history, but also because the high positions they hold may incline them to subjectivity and cause them to be blind to reality. (37)

Mao seems to have designed this Socratic homily partly as a warning to CCP cadres during party rectification and partly as an indirect means of saying to other Communist leaders in the bloc that he, Mao, is not one (like Stalin) to be "blind to reality."

Mao believed that he was being realistic in acknowledging the "leaders-led" contradiction and permitting, even encouraging, open criticism of the party. In the Gruson version of his February speech, he states two reasons for continuing his "Hundred Flowers" policy. First, know your enemy:

> There need be no fear that the policy of "Hundred Flowers" will yield poisoned fruit. Sometimes it is necessary even to have this poisoned fruit to know what it is we are fighting against. For this reason, too, it has been decided to publish the full works of Chiang Kai-shek and even a volume of some of the Voice of America broadcasts. It is not enough to attack reactionaries. We must know

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> exactly what the reactionaries want and what they represent. (38)

When, during the question and answer session, an incredulous listener asked if it were "really necessary" to publish Chiang's works and VOA broadcasts, Mao gave a second reason for "Hundred Flowers," e.g. toughen your forces:

> The new generation, which did not fight face to face with imperialism and reactionaries, must know why we are calling on them to continue that fight. And another reason. We cannot breed flowers in a hothouse. Such flowers will be neither beautiful or healthy. We must strengthen and harden them if their fruits are to be lasting. (39)

Was Mao more realistic than his incredulous and apprehensive questioner? Inasmuch as "Hundred Flowers" was a fiasco, providing intellectuals with a means of undermining the authority of the CCP and even of Mao himself, it would seem that--from a Communist point of view--the questioner was right and Mao wrong: "Hundred Flowers," as implemented between late February and early June 1957, was a mistake.

However, the decisive test for Mao's realism or lack of it would not be his decision in 1956 to begin a free criticism policy (40) but whether he would persist in it if it were clearly a failure. Apparently out of conceit and obstinacy, he did indeed insist, for a time, that the policy be sustained and made even more liberal despite signs of danger to CCP prestige. For Mao's name had been directly associated with "Hundred Flowers" and he and his policy were admired in some parts of the bloc and the free world. To halt the "Hundred Flowers" was to admit personal failure. Stalin was not known for admission of personal failure and neither is Mao.

Nevertheless, it was only a pretense of "Hundred Flowers" which was sustained after June 1957. When it was suggested to Chou En-lai--who had established the "soft" line on liberalization with Mao--by a foreign student that the CCP's action in calling a halt to free criticism in June 1957 contradicted Mao's idea of "Hundred Flowers," Chou snapped that it was not a contradiction at all. "Hundred Flowers" continues--but why should enemies of "socialism" be permitted to speak?

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The image of Mao which emerges from these developments in 1957 is that of a leader who bends theory to fit his view of what is needed on the practical level. Beyond doubt, his view of what is needed on the practical level is sometimes obscured and distorted (partly by conceit). Nonetheless, Mao in 1957 gave theory second place to practical policy. He was not really serious about the concept of non-antagonism in contradiction. For example, Mao manipulated this concept in a rather flippant way. In the Gruson version of his February speech, he says:

> ...it is possible that the enemy-nation type of contradiction may evolve into a non-antagonistic type of contradiction. For instance, this would happen if Chiang Kai-shek would return Taiwan to People's China. In that case, it would become a purely internal matter of People's China and the differences would be of a non-antagonistic type. (41)

Thus, for reasons of state, Mao removes the idea of non-antagonism from the theoretical level, showing how it can be twisted and reduced to a tool of policy, and a very convenient tool indeed, seeing that it is he who decides what is non-antagonistic and what is not.

The Mao of 1957 attempted to storm the fortress of originality once again as he had attempted in previous years, and he did not try half-heartedly. In his February 1957 speech, Mao leaves the great names of Communism in his wake:

> These problems /of contradictions in "socialist" society/ are new in Marxism-Leninism. Marx and Engels did not know about these problems for obvious reasons. Lenin mentioned them but did not enlarge upon them because during his lifetime, as a result of foreign intervention, it was difficult to speak about internal problems only.
>
> As for Stalin, his opinions can be considered only negatively. The experience of the Soviet Union in this respect shows that Stalin made the mistake of substituting internal differences for external antagonism, which resulted in a rule of terror and the liquidation of thousands of Communists. (42)

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It is in this way that Mao clears his own path to originality. And when, following the speech, his eulogists searched every sentence for an unique idea, it appeared that even Lenin was by contrast a novice on the matter of contradictions under "socialism." Thus in March 1957, Ouyang Yu-ching says that "Lenin had spoken of the disappearance of antagonism and the continued existence of contradiction. But no one has, with Chairman Mao's clarity, set for the concept that we should acknowledge the existence for a long time of contradictions among the people." (43)

Mao's Positions Discredited

That Mao went too far for a Communist (and that he is determined not to go so far again) in his liberalization policy of 1957 is indicated by the fact that three of his four innovations are not discussed by Chinese writers today. That is, of the four (leader-led contradiction, non-Communist criticism of the CCP, toleration of "small" strikes, and the non-antagonistic contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the working class) only the last one remains as an acceptable matter for discussion. The revived "Hundred Flowers" of 1961 is not the "Hundred Flowers" of 1957. "Debate" is permitted only on academic subjects. The discussion of political subjects which is fostered at the "meetings of immortals" (shen-hsien hui) is just that, i.e. it is fostered, guided, and controlled in order to prevent the "negative" criticisms of 1957 from re-appearing.

In his June 1957 retreat from experimenting with liberalization, Mao also went too far, in the view of at least one kind of Communist. Mao came remarkably close to giving a public demonstration of the validity of Trotsky's analysis of the nature of bureaucratic-power rule in the Soviet Union. In his The Revolution Betrayed (1937), Trotsky had argued that the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 overthrew the power of all classes--other than that of the new Bolshevik bureaucracy--but failed to attain real "socialism" as Marx and Engels understood it. Therefore, said Trotsky, the Soviet bureaucracy was a unique type of class-rule:

> Caesarism arose upon the basis of a slave society shaken by inward strife. Bonapartism is one of the political weapons of the capitalist regime in

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> its critical period. Stalinism is a variety of the same system, but upon the basis of a workers' state torn by the antagonism between an organized and armed Soviet aristocracy and the unarmed toiling masses. /emphasis supplied/ (44)

In his article On the Problem of the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People, Mao indicates which forces maintained the stability of the mainland regime during the Hungarian revolution and its effect in China and, implicitly, during the free criticism period of "Hundred Flowers." The "armed" Chinese aristocracy, so to speak, was the main force:

> Of course, the consolidation of our state is not primarily due to the suppression of counter-revolution. It is due primarily to the fact that we have a Communist party and a Liberation Army steeled in decades of revolutionary struggle, as well as a working people that has been similarly steeled. Our party and our armed forces are rooted in the masses; they have been tempered in the flames of a protracted revolution; they are strong and they can fight. (45)

In the passage immediately preceding this one, Mao says that the "incident" in Hungary "caused some of our intellectuals to lose their balance a bit but there were no squalls in our country." This is probably an accurate statement--an accurate statement of the effectiveness of CCP control. But it is also a comment of the degree to which intellectuals are tyrannized in China. The extent of the tyranny in China is concealed by its very success: few intellectuals care to incur a persecution which is certain to be thorough and effective. Therefore, in the revived "Hundred Flowers" today they "support" the regime. They try to avoid words and deeds which could be taken by the authorities as a contradiction of party policy and therefore as an antagonistic contradiction.

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NOTES

1. In his Poverty of Philosophy (1846-47), Marx says that "From the very moment in which civilization begins, production begins to be based on the antagonism of orders, of states, of classes, and finally on the antagonism between capital and labor. No antagonism, no progress." Marx also frequently used the term "contradiction" to describe the relationship between capital and labor.

2. Quoted in M. Shirokov: Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, Leningrad Institute of Philosophy, revised and edited translation by John Lewis, Gollanz, London, c. 1935-37, p. 175.

3. Mao Tse-tung: On Contradiction, International Publishers, New York, 1953, p. 52.

4. Pien Chang: "A Trial Discussion of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's Development of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy," Li-lun Hsueh-hsi (Studies in Theory), No. 9, Mukden, 1 September 1960.

5. Sun Ting-kuo: "A Tremendous Development of the Law of Marxist Dialectics," Che-hsueh Yen-chiu (Philosophical Research), No. 3, 15 June 1958.

6. Stalin: "Results of the Work of the 14th Party Conference" (1925), Sochineniia (Works), Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1946-1951, Volume VII, pp. 90-132.

7. Stalin: Leninism, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 368.

8. M. Shirokov: Textbook of Marxist Philosophy, op. cit., p. 174.

9. "Historical Materialism," in Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia (Great Soviet Encyclopedia), Volume XXIX, 1935, pp. 727-750: The Marxist Leninist Theory of Social Development.

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10. M. Rozental and P. Yudin: Kratki filosofsky slovar (Short Philosophical Dictionary), Ogiz., Moscow, 1939, p. 11

11. A.A. Zhdanov: On Literature, Music and Philosophy, Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., London, 1950, pp. 107-108.

12. P. Yudin: "The Prime Source of Development of Soviet Society," in the symposium O sovetskom sotsialisticheskom obshchestve (On Soviet Socialist Society), edited by F. V. Konstantinov, M.D. Kammari, and G. Glazerman, Moscow, 1948.

13. Kratki filosofsky slovar, 3rd edition with revisions and additions, Moscow, 1951, pp. 13-14. The 4th edition, published in 1955 with additions and corrections, describes a special feature of non-antagonistic contradiction: "The characteristic feature of non-antagonistic contradictions as distinguished from antagonistic contradictions consists in the fact that in their development they do not turn necessarily into a hostile opposition and the struggle between them does not result in conflict."

14. Ibid.

15. B. Kedrov: "On Forms of Leaps in the Development of Nature and Society," Bol'shevik, No. 15, August 1951.

16. Hsu Li-chun, Chen Tao, and Chen Mou-i: "On the Problem of the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People is a Mighty Contribution to Marxism-Leninism," Che-hsueh Yen-chiu, No. 3, 15 June 1958.

17. Mao Tse-tung: On the Problem of the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (1957), English-language text, New Century Publishers, New York, 1957, pp. 10-11.

18. Stalin: Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR (October 1952), in Current Soviet Policies, edited by Leo Gruliow, Praeger, New York, 1953, p. 14.

19. Mao Tse-tung: On the Problem of the Correct Handling..., op cit., p. 10

20. Ts. Stepanyan: "Contradictions in the Development of Socialist Society and the Means of Resolving Them," Voprosy filosofii (Problems of Philosophy), No. 2, 1955.

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21. L. N. Kogan and E.D. Glazunov: "The Problem of Contradictions in Soviet Society," Voprosy filosofii, No. 6, 1955.

22. Writing in 1954, G.E. Glezerman had discussed the base-superstructure contradiction and had stated that "It is necessary to acknowledge contradictions which arise between the base and superstructure...under socialism." Cf. his Bazis i nadstroika v sovetskom obshestve (Base and Superstructure in Soviet Society), Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences USSR, Moscow, 1954, p. 325.

23. Ai Ssu-chi: "The Contradiction between Productive Forces and Relations of Production and Contradictions Among the People," Che-hsueh Yen-chiu, No. 3, 15 June 1958.

24. Pang Tzu-nien: "Some Thoughts on Chairman Mao's Theory of Two Kinds of Contradictions Viewed from the Marxist Theory of State," Che-hsueh Yen-chiu, No. 3, 15 June 1958.

25. Mao Tse-tung: On the Problem of the Correct Handling..., op. cit., p. 4.

26. Sun Ting-kuo: "A Tremendous Development of the Law of Marxist Dialectics," Che-hsueh Yen-chiu, op. cit.

27. Che-hsueh Yen-chiu, Statement of the Editorial Board, No. 4., August 1957.

28. Mao Tse-tung: On the Problem of the Correct Handling..., op. cit., p. 4.

29. Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao, 18 March 1957

30. Sidney Gruson: Dispatch from Warsaw, in New York Times, 13 June 1957. p. 8

31. Drew Middleton: Dispatch from London, New York Times, 29 May 1957.

32. Mao Tse-tung: On the Problem of the Correct Handling..., op. cit., p. 25.

33. Sidney Gruson: op. cit.

34. New York Times, 19 May 1957.

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35. Drew Middleton: op. cit. Mao retains much of this view in the June 1957 version of his speech. He says that in order to get rid of "disturbances," bureaucracy must first be stamped out. "If distrubances should occur as a result of bad work on our part, then we should guide those involved in such disturbances on to the correct path" and take a lesson in order to "improve our work." Cf. On the Problem of the Correct Handling..., op. cit., p. 28.

36. Sidney Gruson: op. cit.

37. Sidney Gruson: Dispatch from Warsaw, in New York Times, 16 June 1957, p. 30. (Continues 13 June dispatch.)

38. Sideny Gruson: op. cit., 13 June 1957.

39. Ibid.

40. This does not deny that Mao, like many leaders in the bloc, overestimated the degree of popular support the regime had at the time. Mao's decision to push ahead with "Hundred Flowers" apparently was based on his and his advisers' estimate that the populace in general and the intellectuals in particular supported the regime. In his February speech he says: "The Communist Party of China now has 12,000,000 members. This is a percentage lower than in many other states, but it is not the figures that count. The Hungarian party had a percentage much higher but the people refused to follow it and the party disintegrated in two days." (Cf. Sidney Gruson: op. cit., 16 June 1957.)

41. Sidney Gruson: op. cit., 16 June 1957

42. Sidney Gruson: op. cit., 13 June 1957

43. Ouyang Yu-ching: "Several Thoughts on Hearing Chairman Mao's Report," Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao, 19 March 1957.

44. Leon Trotsky: The Revolution Betrayed, Doubleday, New York, 1937, p. 278.

45. Mao Tse-tung: On the Problem of the Correct Handling..., op. cit., p. 13.

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